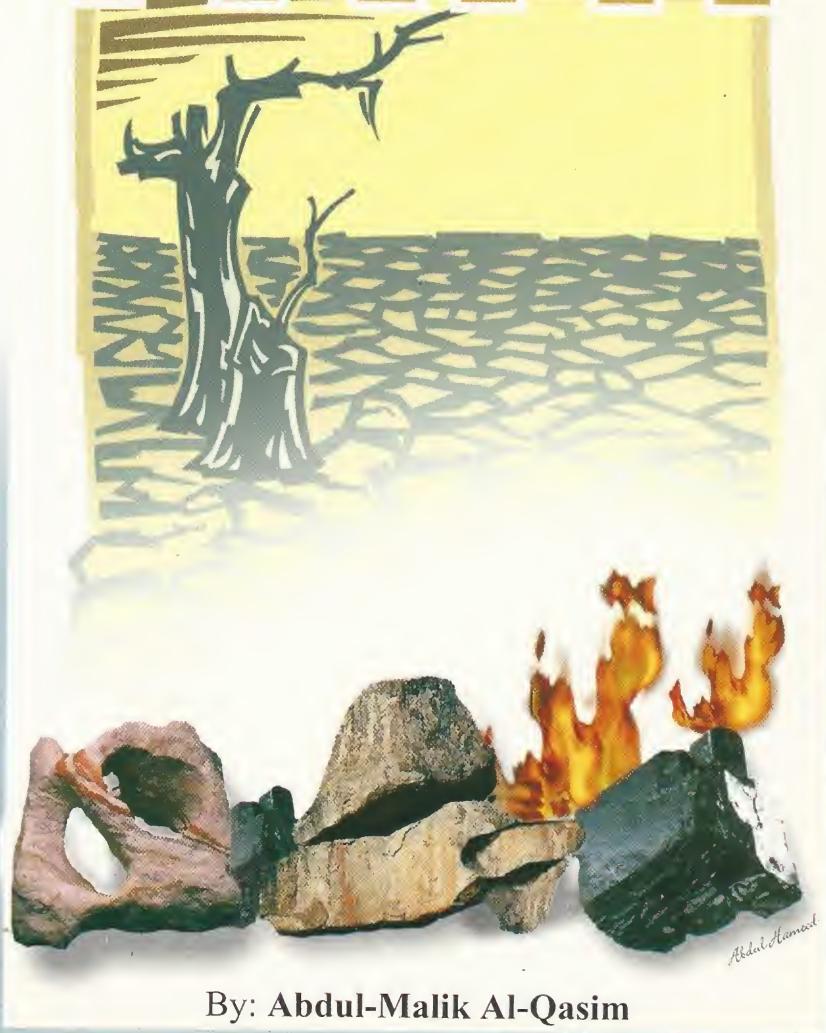


HINDRANCES ON THE PATH



By: Abdul-Malik Al-Qasim

Translated by: Jafal Abu al-Rub

عشرات الطريق

HINDRANCES

on the Path

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Abdul-Malik Al-Qasim

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Jalal Abualrub



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In the Name of Allâh
the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

“Verily, the Muslims (those who submit to Allâh in Islâm) men and women, the believers men and women (who believe in Islâmic Monotheism), the men and the women who are obedient (to Allâh), the men and women who are truthful (in their speech and deeds), the men and the women who are patient (in performing all the duties which Allâh has ordered and in abstaining from all that Allâh has forbidden), the men and the women who are humble (before their Lord — Allâh), the men and the women who give *Sadaqât* (i.e., *Zakât* and alms), the men and the women who observe *Saum* (fast) (the obligatory fasting during the month of Ramadân, and the optional *Nawâfil* fasting), the men and the women who guard their chastity (from illegal sexual acts) and the men and the women who remember Allâh much with their hearts and tongues. Allâh has prepared for them forgiveness and a great reward (i.e., Paradise).” (33:35)

Introduction

All praises are due to Allâh, Lord of all that exists, and may Allâh's peace and blessings be on the most honorable Prophet and Messenger, Muhammad, his progeny and Companions.

The Path to the Hereafter is long and hard and contains hindrances, barriers, shortcomings and errors. However, whenever any Muslim, male or female, falls into a type of shortcoming, he or she follows the mistake with repentance, invoking Allâh for forgiveness, returning to Him and seeking His Pardon.

There are many types of hindrances that Muslims might face on the Path (to Allâh and His reward in the Hereafter). Some examples of these hindrances are: laziness in performing the compulsory acts of worship, ignoring voluntary worship, excessive indulgence in disliked acts (that Allâh and His Messenger ﷺ did not prefer for Muslims, even though they are not a part of the prohibitions) and committing what Allâh has disallowed; the accompanying sign for all of this being the wastefulness of time and energy. No matter if the hindrances on the Path are few or many, they are still difficult barriers to surmount for those who have not prepared themselves adequately for this task.

It is a fact that sometimes, falling into shortcomings might signal the beginning of righteousness and a path that directs to repentance. If so, then one stays on the Path firmly until he or she reaches its end, when the sun of this life sets for the last time and the sun of the Hereafter rises, where the believers dwell in the Garden of Eden in delight and comfort. We ask Allâh to gather us all in that dwelling.

Abdul-Malik Al-Qasim

Neglecting the Rights of the Neighbors

It is the sacred month of Ramadân, when Muslims are fasting in obedience to Allâh and to draw closer to Him; stomachs are hungry and the sunset is near. The family sits around the table on which the food for breaking the fast is placed. Every eye especially the children's, are following the mother in anticipation of the tasty food and drink that she has prepared for them. A few moments to break the fast remains, hands have been washed and sleeves rolled up. Then, the voice of the *Mu'adhdhin* (who calls the *Adhân* — the call to prayer) announces the termination of the tenth day of the sacred month. In haste, all hands race toward the plates, when all of a sudden, the sound of the bell shatters the silence of the moment. They wonder who would be coming at this very moment. One of the youngers who fasted until half the day only, (because he is still young and not required to fast the entire day yet) rushes to the door and inquires, "Who is it?" A voice that has weakened by hunger and shyness answers, "I am you neighbor." The boy went back to his mother in a hurry to tell her and a sense of anxiety overtakes the family, "What brought our neighbor at this time? Has any harm touched her or one of her children?" His mother suddenly remembered that her neighbor's husband has been absent for some time and she rushes to open the door, welcome her neighbor and ask her, "What is it, I hope to Allâh that everything is alright?" Her neighbor lowered her head and said in a shy voice, "We are looking for something to break our fast. My children are hungry and I am still fasting." So the mother pulls her neighbor kindly in and offers her, her kindness and generosity.

When the father went out for mosque to join the prayer in congregation, he lays his eyes on his neighbor's house and realizes that only a wall separates between hunger and full stomachs, poverty and abundance. He asks himself, 'Our neighbor only came to us when extreme need struck her. How is it that we did not ask about her condition? Why did we not visit her? Why did she come to us, is it because we are the closest neighbors to her, or because she is shy and feared that her own people would know that she is in need?'

There are many families who live in the same condition, living in intolerable conditions and lacking the ability to sustain their needs of food and drink. We should all fear Allâh's torment, for we go to sleep with the stomach full while our Muslim neighbors suffer from hunger, our relatives overwhelmed by sadness and our friends in desperate need.

Once, a relative of mine conducted research in a charity organization and came to know that some families, who belong to sub-tribes, known for their wealth, are among the recipients. He mentioned some family names, the rich members of whom can spend on their extended family and relatives for the rest of their lives from the charity they should pay in one year!

Materialism has shot its poisoned arrows at the hearts of many Muslims so much that it is feared the Muslim community will be affected in such and adverse way that the brother does not know or have contact with his own brother, and the same for relatives and neighbors. If we are not at the side of our relatives and neighbors in difficult times, when will we do that, when Allâh sends down His relief to them and they thus overcome the hardship?

No, there are orphans, widows and needy people all around

us. Therefore, make sure to inquire about their condition, help them acquire their needs so that they invoke Allâh for you, might that you never taste misery in this life ever.

Tales from the *Salaf*

Shaqiq bin Ibrahim said:

“While we were with Ibrahim bin Adham, a man passed by us and Ibrahim asked, ‘Is not that man so-and-so?’ and he was answered in the positive. Ibrahim said to a man in the gathering, ‘Catch up with him and tell him that Ibrahim asks, ‘Why did you not greet us with the *Salâm*?’ That man said in reply, ‘By Allâh, my wife has just delivered a baby and I do not have anything, so I went out unaware of my surroundings.’ The man, returned to him and told what happened, and Ibrahim commented, ‘We all belong to Allâh! How is it that we were unaware about the condition of our friend until his condition deteriorated to this point?’ Ibrahim said to a man who was present, ‘Go to so-and-so and borrow two dinârs from him, then go to the market and buy whatever is possible with a dinâr and then give him. That man said, ‘I went to the market and bought whatever I could with one dinâr and then went to the man’s house. I knocked the door and his wife asked, ‘Who is this?’ I said, ‘I need your husband.’ She said, ‘He is not here right now.’ I said, ‘Then open the door and go inside.’ She opened the door, and we took whatever we carried on the camel inside her house and gave her the second dinâr. She asked, ‘Who sent all this?’ I said, ‘Your bother (in Islam) Ibrahim bin Adham.’ She said, ‘O Allâh! Do not forget what happened today from Ibrahim.’”¹

¹ *Sifatus-Safwah*, vol. 4, p. 155

Lie regarding Marriage

The whole world cannot contain my happiness, which I do not hide, and a shy smile appears on my face, as I hear my best friend tell me about her brother, “He wants to marry you.” I said to myself, ‘Now I will have a best friend and her brother will be my husband.’ She praised his mannerism and good behavior and said while smiling, “You will live like the princesses of the Middle Ages. He will strive to provide you comfort and shower you with his affection.” Things happened fast since then and my happiness did not give space to careful thinking. I did not ask for anything, not even a specified *Mahr* (dowry) or where will I live. We did not verify that he even works or where he works, he was the brother of my best friend. I started making plans for the wedding dress,¹ and I took her advice in the type of fabric to use, the gold I should buy, kitchenware, what he likes and dislikes and the best gift to give him.

My father was amazed to my dedication to marry this man, but invoked Allâh to bless my efforts, especially since I am his only daughter.

My future husband chose the most expensive hotel for the wedding and was confused as to the gift he should give to

¹ Which is an evil innovation in the religion, wherein Muslim women wear white dresses like non-Muslim women wear in weddings, thus imitating them, even though Allâh forbade Muslims from imitating the disbelievers. Further, this white dress is nothing similar to the outer garment (the *Jilbâb* that Muslim women must wear no matter the occasion). Other types of *Bid'ah* and imitating the *Kuffâr* pertaining to weddings include wearing an engagement ring, conducting a wedding party where men and women mingle, music is played, and so forth. These are rather evil and unacceptable types of behavior and conduct in Islam.

me. Meanwhile, I overcome by my dreams and passion and during wedding day, I was especially happy. However, the dream ended when I realized that his face showed no concern and he spent a large part of the night out of the house. Whenever I wanted to address these concerns, my friend would tell me that I should forego these minor things because he is a husband! Then I realized that I was married to him not to my friend, and I finally picked up the phone and called my father, who was elated to hear my voice. But my voice was tired and I said, "I do not want him, he is a drug addict." My father asked with his strong voice, "How, where are you now?" The days of happiness ended quickly and elation turned into sadness, "How can you my best friend, lie to me like this? If someone like him wanted to marry you, would you agree? How could you have cheated me?"

Some women ask other Muslim women for marriage for their relatives, praise them in front of them and mention their good qualities. However, much of what is being said are lies or at least exaggerations. To these women we say:

"If someone lies to you, you would be bothered by being lied to. Why do you lie to people then, especially with regard to marriage? Would you agree that the same happens to your daughter?"

Tales From the *Salaf*

Examine this example of truthful statements: Ar-Rabi‘ bin Khaytham’s sister came by and hugged his son saying:

"How are you, my son?" Ar-Rabi‘ asked her, "Have you breast fed him?" She said, "No." Ar-Rabi‘ said; "Why not then utter the truth by saying, 'My nephew?'"¹

¹ *Kitabas-Samt*, p. 255

Third Hindrance

Exposing one's Secrets

There are TV cameras that are affixed on your face and transmit your statements, pains and hopes, what you long for and your happy moments, and even the smallest details about what happens between you and your husband in your bedroom. These television cameras transmit all this to listening ears using your own words.

To elaborate some women, especially who have just married, like to talk to their female friends and relatives about their husbands saying, "He said this and that, and I said this and that; he bought a gold piece for me, he took me to a nice place," and so forth. Some of them even repeat the words of affection that their husbands say to them, sometimes claiming that their husbands cannot stand staying away from them even for a short while! One of them might also talk about her husband's habits regarding sleep, and the problems she faced in this regard, describing her husband to her friends, mention his shortcomings and errors, and so forth. All this is unlawful in the religion, tasteless, and most importantly, a type of backbiting and spreading calumnies. It is not proper for the wife to even mention an act of righteousness that he performed for Allâh in sincerity, especially if he does not like people knowing this quality of him.

Dear sister in Islam! Why is it that you talk about a matter that has conveyed to you in confidence? Think about the women who like to listen to you when you expose your secrets to them, some of them would be elated to hear that her friend is happy, yet, she would wish to her friend's

husband for herself or for her daughter. Some of these women compare their husbands to the husband of their friend who brags about him all the time, and they begin to think that they have not heard a good word from their husband or experienced a happy moment. This way, if you expose your secrets and talk about your husband to others, you might help destroy other women's marriages.

Dear married sister, it is improper that you expose your secrets and your husband's secrets to those who would neither benefit nor avail you if they hear such news. To the contrary, they might envy you and direct the evil eye at you and your marriage. Also, you and your husband will be the subject of many other gatherings that you do not attend, and consequently, you will be the subject of talking and jesting, whatever occurred between you and your husband will become a tale to tell. This is not how a Muslim woman should appreciate Allâh's bounty on her by giving her a suitable husband.

Therefore, if you expose whatever occurs in your marriage, especially in the first night, week, month and year, that news will reach the ears of many women and men. Think if that would be acceptable to you and you will certainly answer in the negative. Therefore, beware of the TV cameras that are being affixed on your face, that is, when you are talking to your relatives, friends, sister, etc., for whatever you say might become the soap opera that is being transmitted to many homes. Hold your tongue!

Tales From the Salaf

‘Ata bin Rabah said:

“Those who were before you considered unnecessary speech as being other than what Allâh has revealed (the Qur’ân and *Sunnah*), enjoining

good, forbidding evil and talking about the matters that sustain your livelihood. Do you claim that there are not over you those (appointed angels in charge of mankind) to watch you, *Kirâman Kâtibîn* (Honourable writers of deeds, one sitting on the right and one on the left to note his or her deeds) not a word does he or she utter but there is a watcher by him ready (to record it)? Do not any of you feel shy that when his record of deeds that he performed by day is opened, that it does not contain any of the matters of his Hereafter?”¹

¹ *As-Seer*, vol. 5, p. 86

Fourth Hindrance

Not Observing Veil

Wearing her full makeup and covering her face with a thin veil that she would fix whenever it moves a bit off of her face, she walks towards the house yard and calls the driver, “Peter!” Peter responds in a hurry and humbly stands a few feet away from her, “What do you wish?” She gives him some money and asks him to go buy milk for the baby, and he rushes to obey her command while she goes back inside.

When her cousin knocks at the door, she hurries to open it for him and shakes his hand, even though her neck and hair are showing. She talks to him and enjoys a laugh, while he sits inside the house and awaits the tea she is making for him, until her husband or brother comes to meet him. Then, her brother-in-law knocks on the door and she opens the door for him, shakes his hand and invites him even though her husband is not home yet.

Later on, while wearing her outer robe, the ‘*Abā*’, she closes the car door and her driver takes her to the tailor, where there are men present, but she does not care. She reveals her face and removes the ‘*Abā*’, thus exposing her clothes in front of them. She talks to the tailor as if she was talking to her mother or grandmother! He takes her measurements, then she covers her face and takes leaves. After, she looks around and finds an old man walking in the street. Yet, as an act of honor, she still keeps her face covered! She then goes to the perfume store where she sets her nose free to find the best scent she likes, and the seller helps her by spraying this perfume and that scent on her hand, saying, “This is for parties, and this is for such and

such events.” She then gives him her other hand, so that she is able to smell the other samples he is going to spray on her hand. She talks to him freely.

After that, she goes to the jeweler and freely gives him her hand so that he places various kinds of gold pieces around it, or on her finger. She then goes to the garment store and complains to the seller that she bought a piece of garment and is looking for another piece that goes with it. He shows her different pieces and she decides which color goes with the piece she bought.

She then goes to women’s store and went to the male seller asking him about the price of a piece that she chose by looking through various pieces of women’s wear. She asks the seller about the price of the piece she chose and tells him that his price is high! He gives her a discount, she tries again to lower the price, and when she almost gives up, she says to him, “and for me?” She discards her shyness; he gives her a good price.

I protect my honor with my money, and never tarnish it, may Allâh not bless money after honor is lost!

Do you accept Hell-fire as a dwelling and its flames as breathing space? You are owner of shyness and of goodly nature, who commanded you to wear *Hijâb*? Is it not Allâh and His Messenger ﷺ who ordained *Hijâb* on you?

Therefore, why do you anger the Lord of the heavens and earth, who is Able to change your elation to sadness, well-being to sickness and happiness to misery? Are you able to resist any of this or have any say in the matter? Who commanded you to consider *Hijâb* of two types:

A type that allows some men to see your face, hair and hands and a type that does not allow men these freedoms? Where will be the driver, seller, tailor, your son and your

husband be standing on the Day of Resurrection compared to where you will be standing? You will be standing alone, humbled by the heavy burden of your errors and sins. When you look to the right, you will see Paradise, and when you look to the left, you will see the flames of Hellfire. Therefore, you choose your destination!

I was told that a woman once suffered from a severe earache and after hard convincing, she agreed that a doctor be brought to check her ear. She only uncovered her ear and left her face covered, prompting the doctor to say to her, “I am a doctor and you are like my mother, so uncover your face.” She said, while dedicating herself to the obedience of her Lord, “You only came to examine my ear, and I have uncovered it for you!”

Tales From the *Salaf*

Hatim Al-Asamm said:

“He whose heart does not contemplate four dangers, is deceived and never safe from acquiring misery. First, the danger of the Day of *Mithâq*, when Allâh will declare, ‘This group is for Paradise, and it does not bother Me; and this group is for the Fire, and it does not bother Me.’ One does not know to which group he is headed on that Day. Second, one was created in three veils of darkness,¹ when

¹ “He created you (all) from a single person (Adam); then made from him his wife [Hawwâ’ (Eve)]. And He has sent down for you of cattle eight pairs (of the sheep, two, male and female; of the goats, two, male and female; of the oxen, two, male and female; and of the camels, two, male and female). He creates you in the wombs of your mothers, creation after creation in three veils of darkness. Such is Allâh your Lord. His is the kingdom. *Lâ ilâha illâ Huwa* (none has the right to be worshipped but He). How then are you turned away?” (39:6)

the angel pronounced him or her among the people of happiness (and Paradise) or misery (and the Fire). One does not know if he proclaimed among the miserable or the happy ones. Third, remembering the horrors to come (after death), for one does not know if he will be given the glad tidings of Allâh's Pleasure or His Anger. Fourth, the Day when mankind will proceed in scattered groups (that they may be shown their deeds) and one does not know to which path he or she will be taken.”¹

¹ *Jami‘-ul-‘Al-Uloomi wal-Hikam*, p. 71

Fifth Hindrance

Delaying Marriage

She requires some qualities in her fiance that are closer to being dreams rather than reality, and this is why she rejects every man who asks her for marriage because she does not see these qualities in them. Someone who is acceptable with regard to mannerism and religion comes along but she realizes that he has many concerns, especially poverty, or because he did not continue his education, and so forth. So she also refuses him and await whatever the future is bringing her, unaware that days and nights pass and she grows older by the passage of time. Suddenly, she realizes that girls of her age have married and have homes and children, while she is still insisting on her opinion. Years pass and her youth starts to fade away, so she forgoes several conditions she insisted on before and then more concessions, accepting those who are less desirable with regards to religion, mannerism and education. She is now suffering because she did not implement the Prophet's command:

«إِذَا جَاءَكُمْ مَنْ تَرْضَوْنَ دِينَهُ وَخُلُقُهُ فَرَوْجُوهُ» .

“If he who is acceptable with regards to his religion and mannerism comes to you, then accept him for marriage.”

In this *Hadith*, dear sister, the Messenger ﷺ has combined for you two good conditions that ensure a happy married life, religion and good manners. They are two connected traits and essential ingredients for a stable marriage that is full of happiness and affection.

As for her dream of the right man, it is a fact that most

young men of marriageable age are similar with regard to financial situation. How many young men are there who have millions of dollars or work as government ministers. Rather, many young men who seek marriage are students who do not have substantial wealth. Some married couples state that the best years of their marriage were during college years, when the wife stands by her husband and helps him further his education.

Therefore, dear Muslim sister, do not rely on dreams or outer appearances in the man you wish to marry, nor make material possessions the mirage that you long for. When there comes to your family a good religious man and you find his conduct acceptable, then do not hesitate to marry him because of his difficult financial situation, because wealth cannot buy you happiness. Might that Allâh endow you with *Taqwa* and reach you whatever you wish.

Tales From the *Salaf*

Asmâ' bint Abu Bakr رضي الله عنها said:

“Az-Zubair رضي الله عنه married me at a time when he had no money, slave or any other wealth, except his horse and a camel. I used to feed the horse, take care of it and train it, crush date seeds for his camel and feed it, bring water and bake. I used to transport date seeds on my head a distance of two-thirds of a *Farsakh* (18 miles). When Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه sent a female servant to help me take care of the horse, it was as if he had emancipated me!”¹

¹ *Al-Ihyâ'*, vol. 2, P. 67

Sixth Hindrance

Not Neglecting shortcomings of each other

The argument became heated voices raised and weeping followed! Things happened, followed by silence, then sorrow.

Muslim sister! Every person, male or female, has a type of shortcoming and the wise woman treats all other people, including her husband, bearing this fact in mind. She knows she did not marry a perfect man, for there is no perfect man, except for Allâh's Prophets عليهم السلام. Therefore, she uses her cleverness to find out the ways and means that bother her husband and cause him anger. She also seeks the ways and means that solidify affection and heads towards it.

A Muslim wife seeks Allâh's rewards for every act she does in her home, for her husband and children. She relies on Allâh's help and direction to direct her husband towards a destination that makes him pleased, using good words and sincere affection.

In contrast, many women err because of the misconceptions they have, or shortcomings, and think that they deserve this or that because she is this and that. Rather, Dear sister, you have rights and duties, and if you are being a wise Muslim woman, you will realize that your observing patience carries the rewards of Paradise. This way, you will await Allâh's rewards regarding what you dislike, but observe with patience. Further, if you give up some of what you covet and your husband does the same, the family vessel will be steered on shores of assurance and calmness.

Dear sister, know that every man has moments of happiness and moments of fatigue, and you should choose

which one of them to discuss with him what you like or dislike. Moreover, even if your husband was among the best men, know that he might not be aware of some of your grievances, especially if he consumed in his work. Therefore, let him hear from you good words with a smile, and do not rush the answer. Do not say that this is a sign of weakness. Had the shortcoming that bothered you been in you instead, and he offered you advice using rough words and with a loud voice, you would not have liked it at all. On the other hand, if he offers you good words and reminds you of some of your shortcomings, you will like it. Therefore, choose for yourself the best way you like others to treat you and prefer your husband with it.

Tales from the *Salaf*

It was reported that a man came to ‘Umar رضي الله عنه to complain to him about his wife’s ill-manners and heard ‘Umar’s wife saying rough words to him while he remained silent and not answering her back (even though ‘Umar رضي الله عنه was perfectly capable of stopping her). So the man went away while saying to himself, ‘If this is the condition of the Chief of the Faithful, what about me?’ ‘Umar رضي الله عنه went out and saw the man leaving and summoned him saying, “What is your need?” The man said, “O Chief of the Faithful! I came to you to complain of the ill-manners that my wife has with me and heard your wife doing the same with you. So I went back and said to myself, ‘If this is the case with the Chief of the Faithful, what about me?’” ‘Umar رضي الله عنه said:

“I am patient with her because she has rights on me.”¹

¹ *Akhbar ‘Umar*, by ‘Ali and Naji At-Tantawi

Seventh Hindrance

Interfering in the Affairs of Others

She gave a sigh in relief while closing the car door and sitting next to her husband. She did not give him a chance to ask her what she thought of his relatives. She said, “It was as if I am in a test, even though I went to them as a visitor who wanted to greet them. They asked many questions, as if they were shooting arrows shot at me. They asked about where I study, how much I bought my dress for, who paid for it, and so forth. I did not have a time to breathe, as if there were three cannons directed at me, one would barely stop then the other would start. They offered me some tea that got cold quickly because of my being busy answering and explaining.”

Dear sister, some men and women think that it is a type of genius to collect information about other people’s private affairs, even though if you ask one of them a question they would not give a straight answer. However, this indeed is a type of ill-mannerism.

A sign of one’s excellence in the religion is that he or she avoids what does not concern him or her. What would you loose if you do not know about other people’s private affairs? It is enough to offer them the Islamic greeting and talk with them about good things. Such audiences should by no means become interrogation meetings, for this would be unbearable, might put other people off from visiting you and having ties of affection and kindness with you.

Therefore, do not ask too many questions, for if you place yourself in the same position, you would give general answers or interrupt the question while showing discomfort

and annoyance. It is a type of good conduct and being hospitable that you not embarrass your guests or annoy them. In contrast, many women have taken the habit of asking too many questions and outright interrogation of others, so that they do not leave any matter they uninvestigated, whether major or minor.

Therefore, dear Muslim sister, do not concern yourself with other people's affairs or stir sadness and depression in them, for those who concern themselves with observing what other people do or say will kill themselves in grief. Moreover, there are no material or religious benefits to gain from investigating other people's business and affairs.

Tales From the *Salaf*

A man from the tribe of Tamim said:

“I accompanied Ar-Rabi‘ bin Khaitham for ten years, and I only heard him twice ask about the affairs of this life. Once he asked, ‘Is your mother still alive?’ and another time he asked, ‘How many mosques do you have in your area¹?’”²

¹ He listed this among the affairs of the life, indicating that building many mosques is not a matter of the religion. Rather, Islam does not look favorably at building many mosques in close proximity to each other, as is the case today, so that the community of the believers does not scatter in various mosques.

² *Hilyatul-Auliyâ'*, vol. 2, p. 110

Minor Mistakes

Away from the ears of other girls, several girls sit in a corner in the school talking in confidence, and she sits among them listening. One of them said, “He loves me and says he wants to marry me,” and takes from her purse a gift that he gave her. Another girl talks about her friend’s jealousy and his protesting that she goes to the market by herself.

With delight and amazement, she listens to whatever they are saying and are able to do. She starts conversing with them, when two of them address her saying, “We will look for a boyfriend for you, just to talk to him over the phone so that you will not have boredom in your life. Just a phone call, not more.”

Days afterwards, while feeling boredom and somewhat depression, a flood of thoughts start to rain on her mind, prompting her teacher to ask, “What is the matter with you?” She says that she had a problem at home, but in fact, her heart has a crush on the young man she talked to over the phone. He has already saw her twice during the month they talked to each other, and she already does what he tells her to do and refrains from what he tells her not to do. He then asked for more.

She now realizes her error, but he had tapes and pictures of her and threatens to expose her to her father if she refuses to see him again. She cries and reminds him of Allâh, but he says that he is in love with her and would do anything to be close to her. All of a sudden, the quiet and easygoing boyfriend turned into a wolf that seeks to prey on a woman’s honor and respectability.

Have you seen, dear sister, the humility of sin and the degradation evil brings forth. Some girls are drawn into greater evil than merely talking over the phone with some young men whom they thought of as friends.

Therefore, phone calls of this type are a dangerous lure and a hole that has no bottom. It carries with it the dangers of wasting time, using time in what bring about shame and an evil reputation among people. However, this is not all, for what awaits people who indulge in these acts is the recompense and punishment in the Hereafter.

This is why we advise Muslim mothers to give special care and attention to their teenage daughters. Once, Allâh's Messenger ﷺ asked his daughter Fatimah، رضي الله عنها wife of his cousin 'Ali، رضي الله عنه "Where are you coming from?" She did not get angry or bothered by his question, even though she was tremendously wise and honorable. Rather, she simply answered her father, "I came from the house of so-and-so family, I was comforting them for their loss."

Therefore, dear Muslim sister, what bother would it be to you if you are made aware of what your daughter does? You should not feel guilty if they think that you are interfering in their private affairs, it is your duty and right. Yet, you should do this in the best way, offering yourself as a friend to your daughter and listening to whatever is troubling her and her thoughts about various matters. This way, you will become your daughter's friend, sister, as well as, her mother.

Allâh said:

﴿ وَلَا نَقْرِبُوا الْزَنْجَ إِنَّمَا كَانَ فَحِشَّةً وَسَاءَ سَيِّلًا ﴾ [الإسراء: ٣٢]

"And come not near to unlawful sex. Verily, it is a *Fâhishah* (a great sin) and an evil way (that leads

one to Hell unless Allâh forgives him).” (17:32)

In this *Âyah*, Allâh warns against even approaching the ways and means of *Zina* (adultery and fornication). Allâh did not merely say, “Do not commit *Zina*,” because *Zina* does not just happen without lures that lead to it. Rather, there are various steps, statements and actions that direct to *Zina*, including phone calls between males and females, which might seem easy and less dangerous than other aspects of illegal sexual behavior.

From the Honorable *Hadith*

When the Prophet ﷺ took the *Bai’ah* from men, while he was standing on Mount Safa, he started taking the *Bai’ah* from women through ‘Umar رضي الله عنه. Hind bint ‘Utbah, Abu Sufyan’s wife, came while wearing a veil for fear that the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ might recognize her, because of what she did to his uncle Hamzah رضي الله عنه.¹

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said:

«أَبَا يُعْكِنَ عَلَى أَنْ لَا تُشْرِكُنَ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا»

“I accept the pledge from you that you associate none with Allâh in worship.”

‘Umar رضي الله عنه took the pledge from women on the Prophet’s behalf that they associate none with Allâh in worship. The Prophet ﷺ then said:

«وَلَا تَسْرِقُنَ».

“And that you do not commit theft.”

¹ When she promised Wahshi that if he killed Hamzah رضي الله عنه she would free him. He killed Hamzah رضي الله عنه during the battle of Uhud and she opened his belly and tried to eat his liver raw, but could not chew it.

Hind said, “Abu Sufyan is a miser, so what if I spent some of his money (on his children)?” Abu Sufyan replied, “Whatever you take, I allow for you.” The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ laughed as he recognized her and said:

«وَإِنَّكَ لَهَنْدٌ؟» .

“You are Hind?”

She said, “Yes, so forgive the error that had occurred, O Allâh’s Messenger!” He said, “May Allâh forgive you.” He said next, “And that you do not commit *Zina*.” Hind commented, “Does the free woman commit *Zina*, O Allâh’s Messenger?”

Evil Talking

A unique silence engulfs the meeting. A woman in the meeting opens her mouth in surprise, another puts one hand on another while a third moves forward. They are all eager to hear every word that is being said, especially since the talker asserts what she is talking about with evidence, “So-and-so went to him and was cured, all thanks to Allâh. So-and-so disliked his wife but now he cannot stand being away from her, ...” When she finished what she was talking about, they all asked her, “How can we reach him?” Then each one of them started talking about her complaints. One of them said that her back deprives her of sleep at night, while another woman says that her feet hurt. An old woman said that her daughter has a troubled marriage, there might be a magic spell that is placed on them, she adds.

Within a week, an entire neighborhood sought out that man. The woman who complained from her back ended up telling him the troubles she faced with her husband. Another woman says that she married a month or a year earlier but did not get pregnant yet, and so forth; an amazing scene in which various types of needs are being mentioned and pursued. After another week, teachers and female students transfer the news to their school and many other women seek the amazing healer.

Dear sister, have you heard of similar tales? Where is the belief in Allâh and why does it fade away this easily? How can Muslim women even talk about such evil in their meetings? It is a fact that sometimes, many Muslim women go to these claimed healers, who use magic and

are plain liars, than to hospitals. They do not recite the Qur'ân or use the healers that Islam encourages, such as authentic supplication of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and using medicine. It is amazing that very few Muslim women recite the Qur'ân on a regular basis, yet regularly visit these liars. Where is the correct Islamic creed, *Tauhid* and the Prophet's statement:

«مَنْ أَتَىٰ كَاهِنًا فَصَدَّقَهُ بِمَا يَقُولُ فَقَدْ كَفَرَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَىٰ مُحَمَّدٍ

«بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

“He who goes to a soothsayer and believes what he says will have disbelieved in what has been revealed to Muhammad.”

Tales From the *Salaf*

Al-Hasan said:

“I never gazed with my eyes, spoke with my tongue, used my hand or stood on my feet but after contemplating if it was in obedience or disobedience of Allâh. If it is in obedience, I would move forward. Otherwise, I would take a step back.”¹

¹ *Jâmi 'ul- 'Al-Uloomi wal-Hikam*

Neglecting Children

My father grew old and illnesses started to further weaken his body, until he died. Many people offered their condolences, many of whom we did not even know. This is the Muslim society, affectionate and kind, especially when afflictions strike and people need soft and kind words that will console and comfort those affected by afflictions.

During those sad and tearful days, when we were still young, my mother tried to hide her tears so that we would not see them, even though she loved my father dearly. She did not want sadness to persist and tears to keep flowing. We called my brother who was away studying and he insisted on coming back, saying that our other brother is still young and we did not have anyone to help us. My mother firmly responded that he should keep studying and my brother offered to come for just a few days. Again, my mother said that he should not come, and when the call ended, she went to her room showing weakness and the heavy burden of the affliction. She tried not to make us hear her crying; her husband is in the grave, her son is far away and her children are around her and still young. Yet, her resolve did not weaken; she kept on. A few years later, she was laid beside my father, just a few months before my brother came back after he graduated. He did not find his affectionate mother to share his joy with him.

Dear sister, there are parents who do not insist that their children should strive hard while studying or working, as if our nation is in need of more weak dedicated men. However, men are reared by their mothers and with her direction and dedication. The mother shares in the

building of the Muslim Society, until she witnesses the place that seed takes in the society, whether it is a weak link from which Islam is attacked or a fortified fort that only becomes firmer by the passage of years. You, dear sister, help form the future of the Muslim nation, so let your efforts be righteous and good.

Tales From the *Salaf*

Al-Asma‘î said:

“I and a friend of mine went to the desert and got lost. We later passed by a tent, greeted its people with *Salâm* and a woman greeted us back. She asked who we were, and we told her that we were lost and were comforted when we found her tent. She said, ‘Turn your sight away from me so that I fulfill your proper duty on me,’ and we did. She threw a mat for us to sit on and said, ‘Sit on it until my son comes back.’ She then raised the entrance of the tent little by little. She suddenly said, ‘O Allâh! I ask you for Your blessing with regard to the comer, for the camel is my son’s, but the rider is not he.’ The rider came to her and said, ‘O mother of ‘Aqil, may Allâh reward you for your loss.’ She said, ‘Woe to you, did my son ‘Aqil die?’ He said, ‘Yes.’ She asked, ‘How?’ He said, ‘Camels were all around him and he was forced to fall in the well.’ She said, ‘Come down from the camel so that we fulfill the guests’ rights.’ She gave him a sheep, which he slaughtered, cooked and gave to us. We ate while feeling amazed at her patience. When we finished eating, she went out and said, ‘Does any among you know any part of Allâh’s Book?’ I said, ‘Yes.’ She said, ‘Read some *Âyât* of it which I could use as condolence. I said,

‘Allâh, the Exalted and Most Honored, said in His Book:

﴿ وَبَيْرَ أَصَدِيرَكَ ۝ الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَبْتَهُم مُّصِيبَةً قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَجُعُونَ ۝ أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهَتَّدُونَ ۝ ﴾

[القـة: ١٥٥-١٥٧]

“But give glad tidings to *As-Sâbirûn* (the patient). Who, when afflicted with calamity, say: ‘Truly, to Allâh we belong and truly, to Him we shall return.’ They are those on whom are the *Salawât* (i.e., who are blessed and will be forgiven) from their Lord, and (they are those who) receive His Mercy, and it is they who are the guided ones.” (2:155-157)

She said, 'Is there an *Âyat* that reads like this in Allâh's Book?' I said, 'By Allâh, it is like this in Allâh's Book.' She said, 'Peace be unto you,' and she offered voluntary prayer then said, 'Verily! We all belong to Allâh and to Him shall be our return. I await Allâh's reward for losing 'Aqil.' She repeated this statement thrice, then said, 'O Allâh, I did what You commanded me to do, so grant me what You promised.'"¹

¹ *Tasliyatu Ahli Al-Masaib*, p. 194.

Bad Treatment in the Parents

On his way, back home after a long day of hard work, he felt the sun's intense heat on his tired face. His wife smiled and welcomed him warmly after she opened the door; it is the first month of their marriage. He sits on a chair while still sweating from the heat and asks his wife, "It is rather hot here, why did you not turn on the air conditioner before I came?" She said in a low voice, "Your mother refused and I obeyed her." He said, "She is an old woman and you know that..." thus opening the door for her to complain about his mother! He means that his mother is old, so she does not understand, and kept repeating these words to his wife. Day after day, she would add new complaints until he became bored with his mother and thought that his mother is at fault, while his wife is correct.

He gave her the green signal to assure her that her behavior is correct, accusing his mother of various mistakes just because his wife told him so. His mother became the source of bother and discomfort. His wife said to her friend that finally, her husband is looking for another house where she does not have to take care of an old woman any more. Her husband decided to find another house, escaping from Hell as she described it, and he rented another apartment, leaving his eighty years old mother by herself, feeling alone and fearful. His sister asked her sister-in-law, "Is not your right of being treated kindly require that your husband be dutiful to his mother? What will become of you when you grow old and fall sick? Will your husband be patient with you then, when

you helped him remove kindness from his heart so that he turns away from his mother?"

Dear sister, years will pass and old age will befall you; do you agree that you are treated in the same manner this man treated his mother? He did this to his mother who reared him and fed him for twenty or more years, yet within a few months you succeed in showing him affection and caused him to sever ties of kinship. What kind of woman are you and what kind of husband is he? You have been overcome by selfishness and, as a result, deprived yourself of the good invocation of Allâh from his mother had you been dutiful to her. He is a man who preferred the few rather than the substantial to come, sacrificing his mother to obey his wife. Tomorrow, you too will be a victim of your husband's dutifulness!

Dear Muslim sister, do you not feel delight when your relative visit and your husband treats them kindly? Why do you hate it then that he treats his dearest person kindly? He committed an error today, but might recover his good sense tomorrow and hate you for what you directed him to do. You might say that you are not required by Islam to be dutiful to his mother. Even though, you still have to be kind and good mannered to those whom your husband loves and serve whom he is required to serve, thus collecting good rewards for kindness and truthfulness.

As for your argument that his mother is rough and becomes angry for the silliest reasons, remember that she is old and might not live much longer. Also, you will grow old like she is now, would you want to be thrown out and abandoned? Above all, she is a Muslim person who deserves to be treated kindly.

As for you, who was commanded to be dutiful to your mother, then your mother, then your mother, then your father, do not prefer the lust of your wife to the needs of she who nursed you and stayed up so many night to care for you. Your wife might not be required to serve your mother, but know that if she does, she will be dutiful to you and her. Therefore, use good words to convince your wife to care for your mother, especially if she knows that you would like her to be kind to your mother.

Dear Muslim sister, these are ways and means of righteousness for those who seek more goodness, but the opposite are hindrances that Satan erects for those who fall under his control.

Tales From the *Salaf*

Ibn ‘Aun narrated that once upon a time his mother called him and he responded, but felt that his voice was a bit louder than hers, so he freed two slaves to recompense himself.¹

¹ *Siyaru Alami An-Nubalā'*, vol. 1, p. 366

Neglecting the Rights of Parents

She looked at her mother as she was walking in a rush and said that she was busy. Her mother followed her with her eyes and stood up to work, even though she was ill. She became tired from working and had to rest for a short while on the floor, then stood up again to go on working. She said to herself, "She says she is busy and refuses to help me, I her own mother." She overcame her sadness and when night fell, she sat with her daughter talking to her as if nothing had happened. The mother said to her, "I left a few things for you to do, so do not forget to do them." Her daughter stood up and said that she has to prepare for tomorrow's lecture in college. The mother said, "Every day you have to prepare for this lecture or listen to that tape, does not your mother have a right on you?" Upon hearing her mother's words and remembering Allâh's Statement:

﴿فَلَا تُنْقِلْ لَهُمَا أَفْيَ وَلَا نَهْرَهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا﴾

[الإسراء: ٢٣]

"Say not to them (parents) *Uff* (Fie, a word of disrespect), nor shout at them but address them in terms of honor." (17:23)

She brought the tape she was listening to, a religious lecture, and said, "This is the cassette, I was hearing. We will hear it together in the kitchen; I will never leave you alone to do all the work."

Indeed, dear sister, obeying your mother is better than listening to a cassette or preparing for a lecture, for which

you indeed have ample time. Obedience to your mother is required from you, except when Allâh's disobedience is involved, and being dutiful to her is an act of drawing close to Allâh.

Say, dear sister, to your mother: forgive me for my shortcomings, which are a result of the hastiness of young age. After this, I will never leave you alone, nor will I allow you to get angry at me or allow other people to say that I am undutiful to my parents. I will be the good example that brings honor and happiness to you. Do this, O Muslim sister, might that Allâh make the dwelling that is filled with all that is good and righteous, right in front of your eyes and within your reach.

Tales From the *Salaf*

Abu Al-Laith said:

“There was a righteous man who did not demand things from his son for fear he might not obey him and thus end in Hell-fire.”¹

¹ *Al-Barakah fi Fadhl As-Sa'i wal-Harakah*, p. 97

Evil Companions

She is still in high school, very active and energetic and participates in school and social activities. Everyone likes her, especially her teachers and friends, for she teaches them the Qur'ân and how to recite it properly. She also performs acts of worship and obedience. She fasts three days every month, as well as, every Monday and Thursday. She is seventeen, but her life span came to an end, and does death pay attention to one's age or birth date?

It is a tremendous disaster to her family, for only she died in the car accident, while everyone else survived. Her family was struck especially hard by the news, only yesterday she was with us, hearing her voice and seeing her do things. Now, her chair at school is empty and her desk still had her papers on it; only today she was supposed to teach some of her friends how to recite the Qur'ân. She died and will never come back. When the teacher asked another student to sit in her chair, she hesitated, but sat in it when the teacher insisted, hiding her tears, saying that she died and will never come back.

What can we do for her, if we really loved her, especially since she died young without leaving behind children or wealth? So they gave a gift to her family, and they turned it into an ongoing charity in her name.

This indeed is righteous company and true love. She went away in body, but her love remained in the hearts, especially and foremost the memory of her good qualities. This is the example of helping one another in righteousness and goodness in this life and invoking Allâh

for mercy and forgiveness for the deceased. This is the righteous friendship: if you err, we correct you and if you stray far away, we steer you back to the correct path by Allâh's help. This is the company of the people of prayer and memorizing the Qur'ân in words and practice. This is why you should have such friends, and they invoke Allâh for you, He accepts the supplication, and if you need anything, they rush to offer help.

In contrast, what do you see on the other side of the path? They are evil companions who strive hard so that you err and waste your life. You never benefit from them or learn beneficial knowledge, but learn ways of destruction and misguidance. They lure you to ways of wickedness and mistakes, so beware of them dear sister, for you are a precious stone that if it shatters, mending it becomes especially difficult and hard. Stay away from all ways and means of evil and from wicked companionship, and prepare instead for the fate that you try hard to forget its imminence.

Tales From the *Salaf*

Muhammad bin Yusuf Al-Asfahani said:

“Who is like the righteous friend? Your family will be dividing the inheritance you left behind and enjoying your money, while your friend will be sad, concerned about the legacy of deeds you performed and the final destination you will end up in, invoking Allâh for you in the darkness of the night, while you are buried under the sand.”¹

¹ *Al-Ihyâ'*, vol. 2, p. 202

Fourteenth Hindrance

Not Wearing proper Islamic *Hijâb*

A friend of mine who traveled to Uzbekistan for the purpose of conducting *Da'wah* told me that the most beautiful sight in that country was Muslim women wearing modest clothes that do not expose their faces, hair or feet. He was happy to witness women wear such modest clothes and preserving their honor, but I felt sad because so many of our girls and women spend their time in the marketplace, even when there is no pressing need to do so. Further, where is the *Hijâb* that Allâh has ordained? One of them would wear her '*Abâ*' on her shoulders, while others would wear tight clothes that have openings in them showing their hands and feet. This is not the *Hijâb* that Allâh has ordained. They also mingle with men and talk to them freely; this is when trials in religion are being offered to the heart by Satan, who erects his flag (or headquarters) in the marketplace.

Dear sister, what are the pressing needs that allow Muslim woman to leave their homes and go to the market? Certainly, even if they need to go to the market, they can always find women's only stores where one would not be harassed or bothered by men, and this is better even if these stores do not offer you the best types of clothes that you want to buy. Also, the husband, son or brother can buy many items that women need, without women having to go to the market.

Dear sister, make your concern the race to perform acts of worship, not competing in buying as much clothes and jewelry as you can. Your beauty lies in your faith and honor. If you must go to the market, then make sure to

wear the proper Islamic *Hijâb* and avoid wearing perfume and talking freely to men, especially store keepers. Remember that when Muslim women need to go out of their homes, they do what they are supposed to do and then rush back home.

Muslim women do not need to go to the market often or to wear new clothes every day. It is a fact that when the wife is content and obeys Allâh, she becomes more beautiful in her husband's eye, especially if she is dedicated to his service and comfort. If a woman tries hard to compete in buying clothes and jewelry and spends extensive time outside of her home, her thoughts will not be with her husband, whom she is absent from most of the time searching for new discounts and new footwear. This is not a good wife to live with or it is a good path to follow.

Fifteenth Hindrance

Not Caring for the Children

Islam dedicates special attention to rearing Muslim children, as demonstrated by the statement of Allâh's Messenger ﷺ:

«مُرُّوا أَبْنَاءَكُمْ بِالصَّلَاةِ لِسَبْعٍ وَاضْرِبُوهُمْ عَلَيْهَا لِعَشْرٍ...».

“Order your children to pray at the age of seven and discipline them for it at the age of ten.”

This *Hadith* ordains careful and dedicated rearing of children and using time in the best manner. For instance, at the age of seven, he is ordered and encouraged to pray for the next three years, each day he is called to join the prayer five times a day upon hearing the *Adhâن* (call to prayer).

Dear sister, imagine the number of times the child is called and encouraged to pray before he is disciplined or admonished for not doing so? There are more than five thousand times in the three years between the ages of seven and ten! During these years, the child gets used to praying, responding to the *Adhâن* and watching people pray. Five thousand lessons give on how to pray to children in three years, so that he never forgets the prayer or takes it lightly. Prayer fills the life of the child and becomes a part of his daily activities, he waits for the *'Asr* prayer after performing the *Zuhr* prayer, then the *Maghrib*, and so forth.

Therefore, dear Muslim sister, there is ample time to plant the seeds of righteousness in our children in the first ten years of each child's life so that they are reared to become righteous men and women. During these years, they should be taught basic parts of the religion and memorize

a good part of the Qur'ân, if not all of it. There is ample opportunity in which the mother, for instance, can remind her children of what they learned of the Qur'ân. Further, the father should teach his children and narrate to them stories of the Prophets ﷺ and righteous people. In this case, the parents make good use of their time with their children, who are both taught and entertained. The mother could also offer her children some Islamic tapes that narrate the stories of the Prophets ﷺ and Companions رضي الله عنهم, especially close to bedtime.

Dear sister, the true essence of each family appears on the faces of their children, for the child becomes the family's emissary by the way he acts and behaves. Also, the educated wise mother is she who strives in the rearing of her children and talks to them as if they are adults, with kindness and affection, not threatening or punishing them regularly. Dear sister, do you not wait for the time when your son becomes a man and your daughter becomes a woman who pleases your eyes and comfort your heart? Do you not hope that your children might become righteous worshippers of Allâh? Therefore, teach and rear them in the best manner and assume your responsibility, which is enormously important. People say the women are half of society that rears the other half. Hence, every mother should contemplate the type of society she is producing and rearing.

Tales From the Salaf

Malik bin Dinâr saw a man pray improperly and commented:

"I feel pity for his children." He was asked, "He does not pray properly yet you feel pity for his children?" He said, "He is their chief and they learn from him!"

Discouraging Wife

Some women drive their husbands to dislike them because of their rudeness and wicked words. For instance, they confront their husband remarking on his shortcomings, whether physical, financial or otherwise. She might remind him of his limp or shortness, for instance, shame him because he is poor or uneducated. She is never the encouraging wife, rather does she keep quiet about his shortcomings, instead reminding him of them and belittling him as a consequence.

There was a rude wife who never let her husband rest whenever he came to the house until he left it. She mentioned his shortcomings and shouted at him frequently, so he threatened her that he would take another wife, so that he might find peace and comfort. She laughed and said to him, “Who would want to marry you? You are poor! If you come to me now to marry me, I would not agree to marry you.” He asked himself, “Even if I was not her husband, she is still not allowed to say this to me, for I am a Muslim. Wealth and poverty are from Allâh, and so is the job of creation.”

He then sought the advice of one of his friends who tried to make things easy for him. He said to him, “I will make a fake marriage contract for you with a woman that does not exist, and you tell her about your marriage and praise the other woman’s mannerism and good qualities. Tell her that wedding party is soon and show her the contract if she does not believe you.” He went back home and knocked at the door so that she opens it as usual, and she asked him, “What brought you back this early?” He happily and at

ease, sat where he usually sits and she asked again, “Why are you so happy today and wearing perfume?” He told her and she did not believe him, saying, “Who would want to marry you? You should thank Allâh that I was so patient with you.” He let her mention the usual list of shortcomings she sees in him, and when she finished he showed her the marriage contract. She cried and realized her past errors with him. She tried to apologize for her conduct with him and for being rude, but demanded that he divorce the other wife. He said that he would think about it!

Tales From the *Salaf*

Yahya bin Mu‘adh said:

“Observe one of three states with the believer: if you do not benefit him, then at least do not harm him; if you do not make him happy, then at least do not make him miserable; and If you do not praise him, then at least do not admonish him.”¹

¹ *Tanbih-ul-Ghâfilin*, vol. 1, p. 178

Exposing the Family Secrets

Kids get sick often and complain frequently from the changing weather, as is well known to every mother and father. One day, my wife and I took our son to the doctor. I sat in the waiting area designated for men, while my wife sat in the women's waiting area. We only waited for around ten minutes before we met the doctor. On our way back home, my wife told me that while waiting for the doctor, a woman started complaining to her about her own illness and having to frequently visit doctors and hospitals. She then mentioned her children by name and complained about each one of them, saying that one of them eats and sleeps excessively, and another son lives far away and never comes to visit. She also talked about the latter son's wife who is rude and does not like her, and this is why they do not visit, but occasionally. She also complained of her husband and that even though she had been in pain since yesterday, he only brought her to the doctor today. She had a long speech in a few minutes. I was amazed and asked my wife if she knew that woman before and she answered in the negative. She said that she did not know her name, but she just complained with prior acquaintance. I asked her about the benefit of her complaints, since she was exposing the secrets of her family. When my wife saw how amazed I was, she said, "This is typical of women when they meet, they complain and say whatever they feel in their hearts. Some women say things you would feel shy to hear. Many of them start complaining before asked to, giving detailed information and words of admonishment. If you sit longer with them, you could hear details of many other things."

These are secrets in people's homes, which they would not normally let anyone know of and follow openly. Yet, you would hear that the mother told so-and-so among her friends, and the daughter told her husband and so forth. Furthermore, this attitude has become common practice these days, for women talk about all things when they meet, especially if the subject is a complaining about the husband. They would expose the most private secrets about their husbands, to the extent that some men would be shocked that other men would mention their travel plans, or a car one bought, and so forth, in a public audience. They thought that this news did not leave their homes, or so they hoped. When they inquire about who told them, they would find that your wife has told his wife.

Dear sister, why would you expose the secrets that your husband tells you or complain about him to others? This might cause marital problems, including divorce or at least losing mutual trust between you and your husband. Further, what is the benefit of all this, other than other people feeling joy at your troubles and mentioning your secrets in their meetings? In this way, you neither have found a healer for your problems, nor got rid of the disease. Had any one intentionally collected your news and exposed them, you would become angry and enraged. Why then would you do the exact thing and expose your secrets knowing that people will divide into those who admonish and those who envy?

Tales From the Salaf

Qass bin Sa'idah and Aktham bin Saifi met and one of them asked the other:

“How many types of errors did you find in the Son of Adam?” The other man said:

“Uncountable number of errors, I counted eight thousand. However, I found that one quality might cover all types of shortcomings.” When asked what that quality was, he said, “Preserving the tongue. (From uttering evil, backbiting, spreading calumnies, excessive jesting, and so forth).”¹

¹ *Al-Athkarn-Nawawiyyah*, p. 287

Eighteenth Hindrance

Exposing the Beauty

You would think that some women have forgotten the Hereafter, Recompense, Punishment, Paradise and the Fire, due to their being engulfed in heedlessness and long, deep sleep. There are no limits to what they would do or say. One of them would be rude, wear exposing clothes, mingle with men, disobey her husband if she was married, and come late to the prayer if she does pray. Such women have forgotten Allâh's Statement:

﴿يَوْمَ شَوْلُ لِجَهَنَّمَ هَلْ أَمْتَلَّتِ وَتَقُولُ هَلْ مِنْ مَرِيدٍ﴾ [Q: ٣٠]

“On the Day when We will say to Hell: ‘Are you filled?’ It will say: ‘Are there any more (to come)?’”
(50:30)

They forget that they will be buried in a small hole without water, telephone line, electricity or any other means of comfort. Rather, it will be either a garden in Paradise or a hole in the Fire.

One day, when I was in the graveyard looking at the empty graves that are ready to take residents, a corpse was brought from the hospital to be buried. When the worker in the graveyard lowered the man into the grave, we realized that the hole was rather small. So we moved the corpse and started looking for a wider grave instead. When we found a bigger grave, we lowered him in it and started to throw sand in the grave. He was a stranger dying in a strange land away from his loved ones. When I thought about the graveyard, I realized that the grave is truly a strange and lonely land.

Dear sister, if the woman who wears her ‘*Abâ*’ on her

shoulder and exposes her adornments, realized that she might be covered with that same '*Abâ*' one day on her way to the grave, she might changed her behavior and obeyed her Lord. When a woman dies, the top of the grave hole is covered with her '*Abâ*' so that no part of her body is exposed.

Dear sister, tomorrow, you might die and your relatives will strive hard that no part of your body is exposed. What is the matter with you today, when you are alive and well, you try to lure men with your beauty so that they look at you and you at them? They told you that women by nature like to have men gaze at her and offer words of praise. However, this is the sound of wolves and animals who are saying these words. They are plainly wicked and immoral, so beware of whatever they say! Rather, immoral men direct their words of praise at the exposed beauty of women, also at women who are not beautiful. Therefore, dear sister, do not fall on your face in the Fire of *Jahannam*, nor get deceived because of the beauty that Allâh has given you. This bounty might turn out to be a curse if you disobey Allâh. Tomorrow, you will be asked about everything, so what answer would you be giving to your Lord?

Nineteenth Hindrance

Not Raising the children in a Good Manner

Motherhood carries with it tremendous feelings that Allâh has installed in the heart of every female. For instance, young girls tend to like different types of toys than those preferred by young boys, especially dolls of babies or young girls. If you observe a girl playing with her toys, you would observe that she talks to the doll, cleans it and combs its hair. This early sign of motherhood testifies to the nature that Allâh has endowed females within minds and feelings and the shape of their bodies.

If this is how girls feel about images of young babies when they are still very young, how would they feel when they reach the age of motherhood and have babies of their own? When a girl becomes a wife and mother of a live baby whom she hears laugh and cry?

A very important stage in every woman's life starts when she gives birth and becomes a mother. This is a trait shared by all mothers, whether Muslim or not. However, there are certain qualities that distinguish a Muslim mother. For instance, she awaits Allâh's reward for every act and service she gives to her baby. Rearing children in Islam is a religious duty and the Muslim mother longs for Allâh's great rewards, if she serves her children in sincerity with Allâh. Therefore, Allâh has endowed Muslim women with what He has endowed in all other mothers, as well as, earning tremendous rewards for their efforts. Rearing children is an act of worship for which the mother needs dedication to Allâh, patience and endurance in facing various hardships in the process of raising and teaching children. Further, when the mother does all this,

she also longs for the future when her baby might become a scholar, scientist or a leader of Muslims. When the Muslim mother feels this, she becomes more energetic in teaching her child the ways with which the child will become a good Muslim who loves striving hard in Allâh's Cause.

If we remember the great characters in Islamic history, we will find that the first teacher in their lives was their mother, who bestowed her dedication and care to the young child and sacrificed her comfort for her child's. Nowadays, dear sister, things have changed. Children now learn weakness from their mothers, see the mother's excessive fear for his or her safety and are given inadequate teaching and rearing in the righteous Islamic ideals. Sometimes, one would feel that the mother rears her daughter in the same manner she rears her son, even though there should be differences in this regard. Boys need to be raised as responsible men not lazy, soft slobs who prefer sleep and comfort.

Dear sister, have you reared your children to be righteous and dedicated to Islam, especially if the Muslim nation requires their efforts in knowledge and *Jihâd*?

Tales From the *Salaf*

Did you raise your son to be a man of principals, just as Abu Isma'il, Abdullah bin Muhammad Al-Harawi was? He said:

“I was threatened with death by the sword five times, not to change my stance,¹ but to merely stop criticizing those who opposed my stance², every time I replied in the negative.”³

¹ About the Qur'ân, they say that it is Allâh's Speech, not created, for they knew that he would never agree.

² The Mu'tazilah innovators and those who followed their lie that the Qur'ân is one of Allâh's creations!

³ *Tadhkirat-ul-Huffâz*, vol. 3, p. 1184

Not enjoining good and not forbidding Evil

Most women in the present time think that enjoining righteousness and forbidding evil is a men's job only or a specific government ministry or institution. They forget that Allâh has commanded every Muslim, male and female, to enjoin good and forbid evil, which is one of the greatest Islamic pillars by which evil is repelled, uncaring is dissipated with awareness and ignorance is removed with knowledge. This is how the Muslim *Ummah* stays alert and aware.

Dear Muslim sister, scholars of Islam agree that enjoining righteousness and forbidding evil is a significant part of the Islamic acts of worship and that it is required from those who are able to do so, as much as they could. The weakest state of performing this act is where one is able to perform it only in his heart.

Even though the Muslim society suffers from problems of resolve at present, we are still able to use the tongue in the best manner to perform this important task. For instance, one is able to use good words to advise his or her friend in confidence that he or she has a certain characteristic that needs to be addressed, in the context of brotherly love and seeking for others what one seeks for himself of good.

Women, in particular, meet with other women frequently and many errors occur during those meetings, using the tongue as the preferred tool of choice. Even some women who appear to be righteous outwardly lack the necessary basic knowledge that requires your effort, to correct these shortcomings without hesitation. You can perform this task wherever and whenever you meet other women, such

as at home, meetings, schools, etc. Furthermore, Muslim women who observe the rules and guidelines of Islamic dress and behavior with foreign men, are required to admonish some men who err in public, using soft advice as the method of enjoining good and forbidding evil. Therefore, dear sister, do not ignore the rights your husband, children, relatives and friends have on you regarding enjoining all that is good, and righteous and forbidding evil. You must be kind while performing this task and avoid harsh words and rough treatment of others so that you might become one of the people described in this *Âyah*:

﴿ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَصَارُهُنَّ أُولَئِكَ بَعْضُهُنْ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَايُونَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ ﴾ [التوبه: ٧١]

“The believers, men and women, are *Auliyâ’* (helpers, supporters, friends, protectors) of one another; they enjoin (on the people) *Al-Ma’rûf* (i.e., Islâmic Monotheism and all that Islâm orders one to do), and forbid (people) from *Al-Munkar* (i.e., polytheism and disbelief of all kinds, and all that Islâm has forbidden).” (9:71)

Tales From the *Salaf*

Al-Hasan said to Mutarrif Al-Harashi:

“Advise your friends.” Mutarrif said, “I am afraid to say what I do not do myself.” Al-Hasan replied, “Who among us does all what he says? Satan would very much like to hear this from you so that none enjoins righteousness or forbid evil!”

Conclusion

Dear Muslim sister, there are many hindrances on the path, errors and mistakes to commit wherever you go and at all times. However, by Allâh's grace, there is also the chance to obey Allâh, feel contented with His bounties, and a Paradise that awaits those who return to Allâh with repentance and sincerity. The Prophet ﷺ said:

«اللَّهُ أَشَدُ فَرَحًا بِتَوْبَةِ عَبْدٍ حِينَ يَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ، مِنْ أَحَدِكُمْ كَانَ عَلَى رَاحِلَتِهِ بِأَرْضٍ فَلَأِ، فَانْقَلَّتْ مِنْهُ وَعَلَيْهَا طَعَامُهُ وَشَرَابُهُ، فَأَيْسَ مِنْهَا، فَأَتَى شَجَرَةً فَاضْطَجَعَ فِي ظِلِّهَا، وَقَدْ أَيْسَ مِنْ رَاحِلَتِهِ، فَيَبِينَمَا هُوَ كَذَلِكَ إِذْ هُوَ بِهَا قَائِمٌ عِنْدَهُ، فَأَخْذَ بِخِطَامِهَا ثُمَّ قَالَ مِنْ شِدَّةِ الْفَرَحِ: اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ عَبْدِي وَأَنَا رَبُّكَ، أَخْطُلُ مِنْ شِدَّةِ الْفَرَحِ». .

“Allâh becomes more happy when His slave repents to Him than one of you who rode his animal in a desert. Suddenly, the animal ran away with all his food and drink, so he felt hopeless of recovering it, went to a tree and took shelter under its shade, feeling despair that he would not recover it. All of a sudden, he found the animal standing next to him and, while filled with joy, he took it by the bridle and declared, ‘O Allâh! You are my slave and I am Your lord,’ he made a mistake due to his extreme elation.””

Dear sister, strengthen your resolve and dedicate your energy to avoid errors and carelessness and to rush to a Paradise as wide as the heavens and earth prepared by He Who is Most Generous, Most Merciful and Most Compassionate. Is there any one other than Allâh who accepts supplication and pardon sins? May Allâh forgive

us and you and pardon our parents and all other Muslims. May Allâh make us among those who when they err, they repent to Him and seek His forgiveness.

Dear Muslim sister, once a caller heralded to his people:

﴿يَقُولُونَ أَهِبُّوا دِرَاعَ اللَّهِ وَإِمْتُوا بِهِ يَقُولُنَا لَكُمْ مِنْ ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَنَجِّنَاكُمْ مِنْ عَذَابِ أَلِيمٍ﴾ [الأحقاف: ٣١]

“O our people! Respond (with obedience) to Allâh’s Caller (i.e., Allâh’s Messenger Muhammad ﷺ), and believe in him (i.e. believe in that which Muhammad ﷺ has brought from Allâh and follow him). He (Allâh) will forgive you of your sins, and will save you from a painful torment (i.e., Hell-fire).” (46:31)

We declare that we have heard and obeyed and understood our mission. O Allâh! Accept our repentance, forgive us our sins and grant us Your Mercy.

حِرَاثُ الْطَّرِيقِ

'Hindrances on the Path' by Abdul-Malik Al-Qasim is a very enlightening booklet. He has collected several stories and narrations that demonstrate the Islamic society. There are many small but very important social manners, which we deal with wrongfully. Specially women do not care about it and do it often. The author has pointed out very silently but in a typical manner, just like: Neglecting the Rights of the Neighbors, Exposing One's Secrets, Interfering in the affairs of others, Evil Talking etc.

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